

## CHOOSING COLOURS FOR YOUR OWN PAINTING

When deciding on colour schemes for your own paintings it is useful to think clearly of your own intentions.

You could slavishly copy every hue, tint and shade you see in your subject but this lacks interest and becomes rather a pointless exercise. Your painting can never be a perfect replica of what you see. You are using artificial pigments and a traditional, but none the less limited and rather strange process (i.e. putting sticky coloured stuff on cloth with a brush). Besides if you want a perfect replica it is much easier to simply take a photograph! There is much more to painting than that.

It is much more exciting to think of your painting as a personal, individual response to something you find visually stimulating! Your painting is a new object which will exist separate from any observed place, object or person after you have painted it. The painting needs to have a well constructed composition and a colour scheme that works. It is also a record of what you see, feel and think at the time. You alone choose how you respond to your subject. Your own personal preference, emotional reactions or knowledge of the properties of colour can all come into play here to create a new painting which has a life of its own. A magic mix of the qualities of the subject and your own personal response, far more than any photograph.

### Reasons for choosing your colours

You could - have been taken aback by the unusual colour you see in a mountain sunset like we see often in the Serrer del Ferrer. Like so many natural lighting situations it all happens quickly so you need to plan how you do it. First make colour notes on paper - mix the colours that attract your attention. Make colour sketches like Constable did. Take photographs for reference - Turner would if he had a digital camera! Sit and think about it. Go home and think about it and dream pictures. Your mental pictures could use a selection of the colours you observed, you may simplify them you may heighten them you may add to them, so much painting is theatrical by nature, so learn to visualize. I find red wine or whisky helps. Go back to your sunset armed, with some awareness of your intentions.....and paint. Alternatively you could do as Turner and Constable did, stay at home and paint your dream from your sketches and your imagination.

You could also - have very specific interests like Monet. He was fascinated by the way light and colour appear to the eye. He was one of the first painters to start painting out of doors in order to record the colours he actually saw. He would hold his mixed colour on his brush up against his subject to check the colour. He was also interested in scientific research of the time on the colour spectrum and as a result chose to split his colours into component parts; greens made from tiny dabs of blue and yellow hues. To try and recreate the intensity of light using only artificial pigments is very difficult. Knowledge of the fact that complementary colours intensify each other when placed together can be a useful technique to bring about a colour based intensity. The Impressionists exploited this effect to the limit. The result was a vibrant mass of shimmering colour which seems to capture both the very excitement Monet felt and the energy of the moment.

Or you could also - really like the mood or atmosphere of a place and decide that the best way to record this is by employing your knowledge of colour and psychological response. The blue/grey/greens of Picasso's blue period create a beautiful but rather melancholy mood which reflects a sad period in his life when he lived in Paris in his early twenties. You could look at the nearby hamlet of Casas Ibanez and think that now it is a little sad. Only very few people live there permanently. It is now only a ghost of what must have been; a small but lively and close knit community with everybody working on the land. Casa Ibanez in Blue..... or maybe you feel the ghosts of the Moors expelled from this valley in 1609 and yet their terraces and their way of living are still here for everyone to see.....the valley in Blue.....Maybe you are moved by how hot this place is and think the valley is on fire with hot yellows, creams and ochres.....Or maybe you have other ideas!

Or even maybe you have - a fire in your heart brought about by the sheer excitement of being alive in the Mediterranean sunshine. Or maybe you are sensitive and passionate like Van Gogh and you are looking for the wild colours and the biggest brush you can find to express this passion within!!!!!!!

It is a good idea to look at other painters work and talk with others. It helps you to establish what you feel is the right approach for you or maybe you prefer to experiment and find out for yourself .....